TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

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Shifting Population:

How to Plan a Church Ministry

EDWARD D. HAMNER

These Papers

BECAUSE of wartime printing conditions, it has been found necessary to issue TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH as a bulletin without regular monthly frequency. We expect, however, to be able to make available a series of informal papers, and to print nine of these issues in the course of twelve months, as we had planned and promised. The Committee on Town and Country of the Home Missions Council, the Federal Council of Churches and the International Council of Religious Education asks you to be patient if copies do not arrive regularly.

Brief stories of what people are doing in local congregations and communities will be the chief features. The aim is to help put the worker in the small community into touch with numerous activities.

Part of Larger Program

The paper will be an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program," that will encourage a national "rural church movement." The paper will be closely linked with a regularly held National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country.

This Issue
No. 23
Published January, 1946

• Surveys, and studies of situations, are valuable only as they are translated into action.

The Spirit in Planning

In considering the spirit in which we plan, it must be recognized that there is widespread defeatism, even under normal conditions, and that this is in many cases much greater now. This does not represent the true Christian spirit.

The church may properly consider only that it is the divinely appointed institution for doing God's work in the world, that its problems in America are insignificant compared with the problems in most of the rest of the world; and that if it wants to be a living church, it must forget itself and put heart, mind and hand to serving.

Our problems arise partly because we try to assume *God's* responsibility. Remember: We are sowers; God giveth the increase. We are to preach, teach and minister to a needy world; God will see to the results. Let us quit worrying about the church, and take up the tasks of the kingdom, building our program not in terms of institutions or organizations, but in terms of human need.

One reason we consider shifting populations such a problem is because we have not learned to think in terms of making Christians of people, but are concerned so much with maintaining the church as an institution. We make the individual subservient to the institution, the person to the program, when it ought to be the other way around.

If what we are after is to build up the local church, shifting populations will discourage us; but if what we are after is to build the kingdom of God, we will think in terms of persons and influences.

We are sowers of seeds. Some seed, however, is not sowed in a conventional way. The wind catches winged seeds and scatters them far and wide. Some perish where they fall; others grow. So when the blustery influences of wartime population shifts are over, the seed may not be growing in our back yard, but many will grow where they do fall. Migration need not mean a people lost to the church but a scattering of seed. So wherever the people are, Christianity may find expression.

Results of Migration

We may consider our task in two phases: First, our absent, or non-resident, members who have been shifted by the war effort. The fact that they have moved does not change their status as members of the church, and we must not allow them to be lost.

The church can give them a good send-off and their religious ties will be strengthened. The member, or family, should be urged to establish an immediate contact with a church where they go. As soon as possible the pastor where they go should receive their names and address. If employment of the member is relatively stable, a transfer of membership should be advised by the home church, and even strongly urged. If employment is temporary, and it seems probable that the member may return to the home church, membership may be retained there. The member should be expected to continue support of the home church, and to attend and give some support to the church where he attends. The home church should remember such members when general church letters are sent out and keep in touch with them just as it does (or should) with its service men. An annual or semi-annual personal letter from the pastor or the church board will remind them of their relationship.

Second, let us go back and look at the non-transients in our rural communities. They are not merely the unfit and the ignorant. Some are, but many of that type migrate because they are unsuccessful or dissatisfied in the rural community. This "residue" may be characterized in general as those who are the stable, capable, conservative people, and of the less aggressive type.

Also, let us remember that under normal conditions the rural community loses probably half of those it trains to adulthood. Rural population growth makes this necessary, and it is as vital for the countryside that they migrate as for the city that they should be received to make up its deficit in population.

We are primarily interested today in those situations where this process has been so abnormal that churches have lost much of their leadership and membership and their program is upset by this depletion. In such cases, what are we to do?

Let us catch a vision! We are the "seed-bed" of the church. We train Christian missionaries who go into the semi-pagan cities and live Christian lives and spread Christianity. Despite the so-called impotence of the rural church, a majority of city church members and leaders are rural born and rural trained. (Dr. Regina S. Wieman of Chicago recently stated this to be 62%.)

Let us accept our task and perform it with whatever resources we have. If usual conditions take many of our best-trained young people, and unusual conditions take most of our leaders, then we may discover others who have ability, and who will accept the challenge of need, and develop and utilize their talents. Most people can do far more than they are doing. The church can draw on this wide margin of possibilities, this untapped reservoir of talent, and make people see what they can do, and inspire them to do it. The methods to be used must suit the situation. Let me mention several:

We can improve our Sunday Schools so that they train better. It is not how big they are, but the spirit of their training and the consecration of their teachers that counts most. Teaching methods and curriculum materials are important, but they are subsidiary, for we catch religion more than we learn it, and we are not interested in learning it until we begin to catch it!

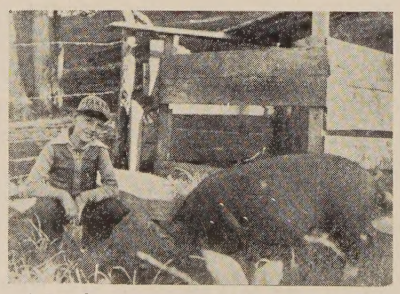
We can train leaders informally by providing helpful reading matter for them. The church ought to provide a careful selection of books, pamphlets and periodicals for its teachers.

We can have training courses. Every church ought to have one or more annual courses where its leaders study together some of their duties.

We can have discussion groups. Several neighborhood groups may be formed to meet weekly in homes for study, discussion and fellowship.

Emphasis should be placed on youth work. In proportion to adults, there are many more rural children and young people than urban. Still, in many churches, the number of youth may be few and the program may not be the officially approved program of the denomination. If young people's societies are not practical, they may be trained by having responsibilities for the care of hymn books, ushering, and keeping of Sunday School records. Suitable social and recreation provisions should be made. Thus they have their fun and fellowship, and at the same time are trained in various phases of the church program.

If the objection is raised that today many rural churches are not only depleted in membership and local leadership, but also are unable to have pastoral care, the answer is that they still have *Christians* in them, and that Christians can carry on a program of Christianity. (Consider the churches Paul established and left without any pastoral leadership.) Christians can find a way to do the Lord's work. Where talents are few, help may be solicited from less-handicapped neighboring churches, but if that is not available, still much can be done because we have a Saviour, and a gospel, and that being so, we cannot—we MUST not—sit back and do nothing. We must furnish the *will;* God will provide a way.



A Lord's Acre pig which brought $38 for the church.

Prayer

• Give, O Lord, to all who till the ground the wisdom to understand Thy laws, and to cooperate with Thy wise ordering of the world. Give to men of science the power to discover the secrets of nature. Give to our statesmen the will to make just laws. Give to farmers and laborers the desire to work together in the spirit of justice and good will. And grant that the fruits of Thy bountiful earth may not be hoarded by selfish men or squandered by foolish men, but that all who work may share abundantly in the harvest of Thy soil, according to Thy will, revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, Oxford University Press, New York, 1933

The Church and Land Tenure

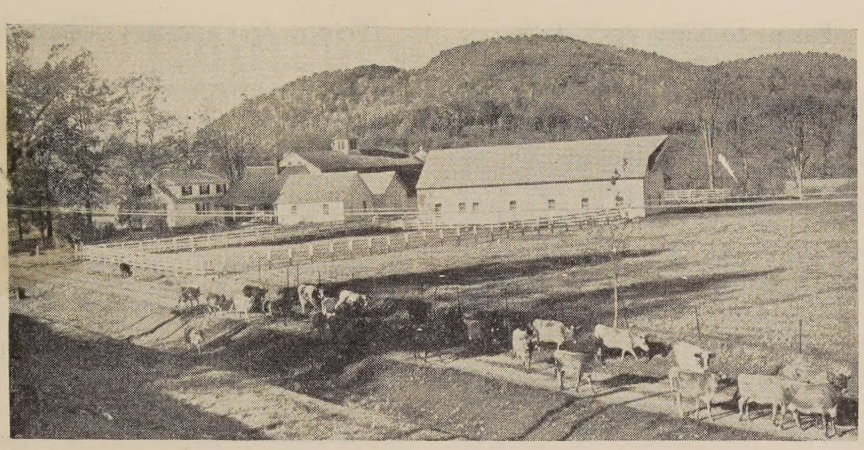
• In the heart of the Cumberland Plateau in the Southern Mountains region, a land tenure conference was held November 27-29 under the auspices of the Land Tenure Committee of the Committee on Town and Country. Rev. M. R. Zigler, chairman of the Land Tenure Committee, presided. Other members of the Committee are A. H. Rapking and Paul L. Vogt, with co-opt leadership of Joseph Ackerman of the Farm Foundation and Marshall Harris of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

Leading authorities from the immediate area were called in as resource leaders. Rev. Vladimir Hartman, field secretary of the Council of Southern Mountain Workers, presented a challenging study of two communities, Bakers Crossroads and Allardt.

Scarritt College Rural Center acted as host and cared for about thirty-five of the eighty-some registrants.

There will be a mimeographed report available at a later date. Those interested should write to M. R. Zigler, Church of the Brethren, Elgin, Illinois.

At dinner one day, Mr. Zigler reported on his recent trip to Europe. The group was moved by the need for relief which he presented and a spontaneous offering of $44.50 was taken up and sent to the CCORR.



U.S.D.A. Photograph by Knell

Roanoke County, Va., Farm.

Land, Homes and the Church

Our Resources Work for the Church

PAUL PHILLIPS

Why We Began

• The Rock Run Church is largely rural, centered in the open country. The members are mostly farmers, though some are in business and a few are in professions, as teaching.

For years we noted the large number of our young people who left the community. Some who left went with the intention of earning money in order to return later and set themselves up in some occupation. Very few ever found their way back.

This concerned us deeply. We needed their fellowship in the church, and in many instances those who left were, in the end, not as well off as if they had remained with us. At the same time we saw our Brethren family farms passing into the hands of some who were not concerned with the better interests of the community.

After prayer and careful study we decided to make some financial resources available for helping young people to become established in the community. We wanted this done in a business-like way and the credit union appeared to be the best plan. This promised us a free hand in meeting the needs of our people, and at the same time we would have the advantage of counsel from competent officials sympathetic to our efforts.

By this plan members of the church who so desire may have some of their financial resources used in a systematic way for the help of any in need of funds for the establishment of homes or for other worthy projects.

The purpose as stated in our Articles of Incorporation is:

1. To encourage systematic saving among members.
2. To make character loans for worthy purposes at moderate rates of interest.
3. To promote a spirit of cooperation and brotherhood.
4. To provide for mutual aid in cases of special need.

How We Began

A meeting was called of all who were interested. It was decided to organize under the provisions of the Indiana Financial Institutions Act, as it pertains to credit unions. Temporary officers, including directors and a credit committee, were appointed. Articles of Incorporation were then prepared to meet our needs. These together with by-laws and application for permit to operate were signed. The necessary record and pass books were supplied by the Indiana Credit League at a nominal cost. We began operating in July 1943.

One becomes a member by paying an entrance fee of twenty-five cents, and by subscribing for one or more shares at $5.00 each. All procedures are businesslike. At the first annual meeting regular officers were elected. The treasurer is bonded.

The credit committee of three passes on all loans, and also *gives helpful counsel* as needed. While our loans are financially safe, the nature of our union and its purpose makes the question of safety of secondary concern. We are primarily a group of Christian persons, not dollars. Our first interest is in having our resources serve the church and community.

Among the 10,000 odd credit unions in the U. S. (only 288 of which so far are centered in parishes) the loss has been less than one-tenth of one percent of loans made. We have an insurance feature which pays off a loan in case of death or disability coming to a borrower.

Experience to Date

There are 93 members. Of these 55 are adults, 13 are young people and 25 are children. At Christmas time the Sunday School presented a membership and one share to each of our young men in service, 19 in all. Our capital stock is now $5,168. This has been accumulated through the purchase of shares by members at $5.00 each. The amount loaned is $2,794. The rate of interest on collateral or short term personal loans is five per cent on unpaid balances. The rate for real estate loans is three per cent.

No payment has been made to investors so far, but this may be done upon the decision of the members. Our first purpose is mutual help rather than profit.

Loans have been made so far for the purchase of cattle, feed, fencing, farm and home equipment and for college education. We plan to build up our capital stock so as to be able to assist certain members in the purchase of land and homes as need arises. This is a good time to build up our reserve, as the greatest need for an association like ours will be in normal times.

We believe this form of mutual help has great value. As members work together in meeting their common needs the bonds of Christian fellowship are strengthened. Talents

and resources which might otherwise be lost are used in a spirit of stewardship.

Those who would undertake this work must be thorough, and prepared to give time in the interest of young people and the high purposes of the church. Officers do their work without pay. Our records are inspected periodically by the state examiner.

We are slowly becoming aware of the fullest responsibility we have to one another — that we are our brother's brother as well as our brother's keeper. We have a responsibility to exercise Christian stewardship of the "nine tenths" also. There is much to be done, but we feel that a good start has been made.

We shall be glad to furnish additional information to any who are interested.

—R.F.D.
Goshen, Indiana

A Pastor on Credit Unions

• We believe that the use of a credit union by the members can be of much help and it is not a matter of "forsaking the word to serve tables." It is merely a systematic method whereby members can help each other.

The older people have become more conscious of the financial needs of young people starting up on the land. Times have greatly changed since our forefathers could begin farming with simple equipment on virgin soil costing but a few dollars an acre.

As pastor of the church I am happy for what the credit union does in the life of the congregation. I have encouraged its growth from the beginning and would do so again.

—Howard H. Keim, Jr.
Pastor Rock Run Church of the Brethren
Goshen, Indiana

Do You Know a Rural Artist?

• The editor of Town and Country Church will be interested in receiving black and white drawings of rural scenes which may be reproduced and used in Town and Country Church. They should be in a good black and white contrast so as to permit reproduction.

Farm, to City and Back

• Dr. James F. LeClere, reared on a farm ten miles south of Dubuque, Iowa, spent twenty-seven years in three city charges before he responded to a unanimous call to a country field in the late winter of 1942. He writes, "The National Convocation on the Town and Country in Elgin, November 1944, was a great inspiration and education to me." He enclosed this report:

"Twenty-two young people of the Sunbeam United Presbyterian Church, who took part in a venture known as 'The Lord's Acre Project' during the past summer, were guests at a banquet in the church on Thursday evening, November 15. They ranged in age from eight years to full-fledged society members.

"They were given a total of $27.00 early last spring, a definite amount to each, which produced a return of $194.66. Amounts realized ranged from $3.25 to $30.00. There were projects of corn, beans, chickens, pigs, lambs and calves.

"The group designated half the amount to apply on improvements in the church plant now underway, and the other half to apply on the World-Wide Christian Advance Movement of the denomination. They are designating some $12 of the latter half as their contribution to the young people's special objective which is a training school for the Anuak tribe in the African Sudan."

New Secretary of Town and Country Work

• The National Board of Missions of the Evangelical and Reformed Church announces the appointment of Dr. Claude J. Snyder as their Secretary of Town and Country Work. Dr. Snyder has for years worked with the Town and Country Committee, and with his rich background of experience as a rural pastor, comes to this new position well prepared.

Dr. Snyder will receive a most cordial welcome as a paid staff member of town and country work and all of us will be looking forward to significant developments from his office.

Town & Country Church

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Remit to the Home Missions Council

Board of Editors

Rural Church Officers

The following persons with responsibility for town and country church in the religious bodies and interdenominational agencies constitute the *Board of Editors:*

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Mark A. Dawber, Executive Secretary, Home Missions Council of North America.

Henry W. McLaughlin, Department of Country Church and Sunday School Extension, Executive Committee of Religious Education and Publication, Presbyterian Church in the U. S.

Henry S. Randolph, Unit of Rural Church Work, Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.; Chairman of the Committee on Town and Country.

Mark Rich, Town and Country Work, American Baptist Home Mission Society.

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Thomas Alfred Tripp, Town and Country Department, Board of Home Missions, Congregational Christian Churches.

A. J. Walton, Superintendent Town and Country, Board of Missions and Church Extension, the Methodist Church.

M. R. Zigler, Brethren Service Committee, Church of the Brethren.

Benson Y. Landis, Secretary, Committee on Town and Country, Managing Editor. (On leave, 1945-46)

Churches and Relief

CCORR Release

• Church generosity is jamming a Kansan flour mill.

The 1,100,000 pounds of wheat flour, a gift of twenty-one local churches representing six denominations in four small Kansas towns, is being turned over to the Church Committee on Overseas Relief and Reconstruction, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

Dr. Leslie B. Moss, director of the committee, an interdenominational agency for relief in Europe and Asia, said that the flour mill has been appealing to him to get the flour on the move to Holland, Belgium, Greece, France and Italy, places designated by the four towns—Moundbridge, Hesston, Goessel and Elyria, Kansas.

He admitted that handling the flour and the tons of other relief goods consigned to CCORR for overseas delivery had become a headache—but the best headache he ever had.

"When we started organizing a material aid program two months ago seven pounds of clothing arrived at our New Windsor, Maryland, warehouse. Last week 24 tons arrived, 24 tons of bedding, clothing and shoes.

"Not only are we getting clothing and bedding but offers of cattle, soap, seeds. Now we are planning shipments of 550 tons of flour", Dr. Moss pointed out.

It was also disclosed that the Brethren Service Committee has cooperated with CCORR from the beginning of the interdenominational effort. Last week the two organizations reached an agreement making available the Brethren's two warehouse depots. The warehouse in New Windsor channels relief goods to Europe and the one in Modesto, California, prepares shipments to Asia.

"We hope we'll be overworked and swamped for at least a year," the relief and reconstruction director said.

Overseeing the enterprise is the Rev. Vinton E. Ziegler, executive secretary of the material aid committee of CCORR. The Rev. John D. Metzler, of the Brethren Service Committee assigned to the staff of CCORR, is planning warehousing and shipping.

Church women were throwing themselves into the task of swamping the material aid committee under the direction of Mrs. Helen Perry Curtis. Even mill ends will be made into new and sturdy garments, capable of withstanding the bitter cold of a European winter. Plans are made, Dr. Moss indicated, to send warm clothing to Korea and Japan.

Dr. Moss paid tribute to the Brethren Service Committee and its work and welcomed their cooperation with the united church effort. In October 150 head of cattle left for Poland, all of the animals given by members of the Church of the Brethren. They have offered for immediate shipment 500 heifers, 20 mules, 40,000 pounds of clothing, 3,000 pairs of shoes, four tons of homemade soap and 75,000 tins of fruit, vegetables, meats and soups.

The Brethren have furnished UNRRA with "Sea-going cowboys"—attendants for all stock being sent abroad, both to Europe and Asia. Rev. John D. Metzler, now field representative of CCORR, said that the "cowboys" who are assigned one to every 25 head of stock have a tough job on the ships and spend on an average of 18 days on each trip.

"It's work," Mr. Metzler said.

Shipments of cattle are being planned to France, Italy and the Balkans, Mr. Metzler announced. When asked if CCORR would ship to Denmark and Holland, he said, "No."

"Denmark doesn't need them—they have a surplus of stock right now. As for Holland, when the Germans asked for Dutch cows, they got them. But the Germans found out too late that the Dutch had given them old cows."

In a statement of policy the newly formed material aid committee of the CCORR declared its aim to assist "the churches of Europe and Asia in restoring their function and service in their local communities.

"We are not embarking on a general relief program," it emphasized, "but a program in aid of reconstructing church life by providing important supplies which otherwise would not be sent."

The statement named the World Council Service Commission and the Church Committee for Relief in Asia—"the two recognized united church relief agencies in Europe and Asia"—as responsible for the allocation and distribution of material aid abroad.

It urged support for UNRRA and other relief agencies stating that to withhold such support at this stage means unthinkable disaster abroad.

Men for Relief

• M. R. Zigler, speaking for the need of the United Church Service Committee with headquarters at New Windsor, Maryland, states that there is a need for 800 men a month for the next ten months to administer relief through the church channels. These men will have mainly the responsibility of caring for livestock being shipped to Europe. The trip takes from sixty to ninety days. Each man is paid $150 for the trip. From this he must pay his expense to and from the shipping point. Passage and meals on ship are provided.

Some rural churches could lend a most significant helping hand to relief by releasing their pastor or making arrangements for some of their laymen to help out in this needy situation.

For definite information, write the United Church Service Committee, New Windsor, Maryland.

• Woodrow Wilson's father, a Presbyterian minister, had a fondness for good horses. He always had two superb animals to pull his carriage. One day a member of his congregation thought he would twit Dr. Wilson by asking, "How is it, Dr. Wilson, that your horses are always so fat and sleek and you are so frail and skinny?" "That's easy," he replied, "I feed my horses, but my congregation feeds me."

When God wants to make an oak, He takes a hundred years; but He only needs two months to make a squash.

Leadership for Tomorrow

KATHERINE RICE

• For the past twenty years the youth of the American Country Life Association have held an annual National Conference with a program directed toward an appreciation for and betterment of rural homes and communities. These annual conferences have been attracting young people in increasing numbers—from a handful of less than twenty in 1925 to the 4-H camp capacity limits (Jacksons Mill, West Virginia) this past fall.

In their formative years these young people had guidance and some assistance from the parent organization which was an out-growth of the Theodore Roosevelt Country Life Commission. For the past four years however the youth section has been responsible for its own program.

Briefly these rural young people have been possessed with a certain insight into the values of rural living. Occasionally this insight was an outgrowth of the adult leadership, but frequently the adults were unaware of the depths and fervor being attained by the youth. The years of recent effort have been marked with difficult challenges which seemed to merely intensify their determination to develop their own leadership and to build programs to meet outstanding educational, social, and spiritual needs of rural life.

The emphasis of the past annual conference was on the youth in the rural community. For treatment of the main conference topics, key speakers made brief, thought-provoking statements that were torn to bits in the small group sessions under youth's own leadership. Following these "hash-hours" the groups reassembled to share their findings and to bring to the attention of the entire conference their further questions and reactions. It was during these sessions that many people from various sections of the country described their communities, and in so doing, came to see their own communities for the first time. It was here that theory gave way to practical suggestions for problem-solving. For example; at the close of one such session a young man expressed the feeling of the group when he said, "Why do we keep looking toward greener pastures for a community house when the Church is the natural community center? I'll bet if we went to our minister and explained that we were interested in the Church then he would be interested in us. You see, I think we are both interested and concerned with the same things but we have failed to realize it because we've been approaching these interests in different ways."

The program of the conference was so devised that through a series of workshop periods each of the delegates gained experience in the areas of discussion techniques, dramatics, group singing, parliamentary procedures, party-fixings, newswriting, and recreation.

Another significant part of the program was the opportunity of worshipping together in hymn singing, vesper services and an inspiring candle-lighting ceremony. The candles were lighted as the delegates voiced pledges carried into the realm of idealism—pledges in which they dedicated themselves to the responsibilities of leaders in the present and future, national and international situations. For example; a candle was lighted for the homes of the community; another for the open doors of the churches; another for the good and holy earth and for the working hands of free men and free women who sow, cultivate, and reap the harvest we enjoy; and still another for a hope—a hope that the time will come when the American dream of respect and justice for all will come true, when we will not hurt one another by work or deed because of differences in race, national origin, color, or creed.

A considerable portion of the business meeting was devoted to the adoption and signing of a new constitution which changed the Association from Youth Section of A.C.L.A. to Rural Youth of United States of America. The newly formed Association with practically the same objectives as held formerly is dependent on the voluntary affiliation of local clubs and individual members. The hope was expressed, even during the business meeting, that the program would soon extend to many of the formerly unreached clubs in all regions of the United States of America.

In voicing the conviction of the conference one of the young people made a plea for the conference delegates on returning home to urge greater participation of their local clubs, in activities aimed at better government, better community services, more cultural development, better citizenship in the local and world community and the upholding of Christian ideals.

A 4-H Club Lord's Acre Irish potato project.

Radio Bible Quiz

CLYDE N. ROGERS
Nebraska Wesleyan University,
Lincoln, Nebraska

Yes, children enjoy studying the Bible! I have proved to my own satisfaction something which I had always believed—that if properly interpreted the Bible is enjoyed by people of all ages.

From February through June, 1945, I conducted a weekly radio broadcast known as the "Know Your Bible Series", with juniors and intermediates from my parish and other parishes near Ithaca, New York, participating.

Prior to our first broadcast fifteen boys and girls from one of my churches gathered at the parsonage for an oral Bible quiz. After listening to their answers, a written test was given and those having the highest scores and best voices were selected to go to the radio station for an audition. The following Sunday morning these five appeared on the air for the first time.

For the sake of having all of them participate we put nineteen boys and girls on the program one morning asking only those questions which could be answered briefly. As interest in the program grew, boys and girls from other parishes were included, making a total of thirty-five different ones who appeared on the program.

Boys and girls were selected one week in advance to appear on the following Sunday's program. Usually the group included people who had previously been on the program and two who were new to radio. We used Bowie's *Story of the Bible,* lending each pupil a copy. A few days in advance, assignments of those pages to be studied that week were given, and certain important passages were marked to aid them in their study. They knew the characters we would study but did not know what the questions would be.

We discovered that both our radio audience and the participants enjoyed the discussion type of questions most. For instance, for five weeks we studied the life of St. Paul as given by Bowie. Sometimes the participants became so articulate that they would talk four or five minutes until I interrupted to lead another student into the discussion.

Leading up to Easter we studied the life of Christ, and on Easter Sunday we used the entire period in discussing the resurrection stories. On Mother's Day we studied "Mothers of the Bible—Good and Bad," showing the influence of different types of mothers. We also studied one mother-in-law (Naomi) and the following week much of our fan mail commended our recognition of mothers-in-law. For Rural Life Sunday we gave assignments throughout the Bible in regard to rural life, using Old Testament stories, Psalms and several of the New Testament parables.

Our average of correct answers would have run about ninety percent. Several youngsters appeared as many as ten or twelve times and in the total period missed only two or three questions. One twelve-year-old girl, who was on the air more than any other person, answered correctly each question asked her. One boy, a bit timid at first, grew with the program and at the close of the series discussed his questions enthusiastically and thoroughly.

People of all ages and from many walks of life wrote "fan mail" to us. When announcement was made we were leaving the community to take up work elsewhere, many people expressed their regret that the program was being discontinued. The management of the radio station indicated its desire to resume the program this fall if a director could be secured.

One rural church school superintendent asked her pupils to listen to the broadcast each Sunday morning, and used the first portion of her Church School period to discuss our topic for that day. Another outgrowth of the program was a Bible quiz as a part of the regular evening meeting of a combined youth group on a large rural parish where from forty to sixty boys and girls were in regular attendance. Some of them who had had no background for the study of the Bible later participated in our program, and did an excellent job.

Sometimes we closed our program with a question for our radio audience to answer. We received many replies. We also asked people to submit questions which we might use on the air and received more questions, (accompanied by the answers) than we were able to use.

My wife was my co-worker in writing the script and by listening to the program each Sunday, was able to make helpful suggestions. It was a great joy for us to note the development of these boys and girls from week to week. We feel that this program has been inestimably valuable to the participants in providing a basis for the study of the Bible throughout their lives.

We share these experiences with you because we believe that great opportunities are in store for those who will give themselves to this type of endeavor. If liberal Protestantism is to take the place of leadership that it should it must again capture the imagination of its people in the use of the Bible.

Pastors' Short Course

• Robert Tully, rural representative of the Colorado Council of Churches, has sent in a most interesting report of the Pastor's Short Course held at Fort Collins, Colorado, last summer. It contains a running commentary on the happenings of the week, including even a few of the best stories which were told. There is a summary of several hundred words of every main presentation.

Most significant of all is a complete schedule of the plan for the short course next year. The theme is to be "The Rural Church Builds the Rural Family." Major attention is to be given to the following phases, sociological data on the family, pastoral counseling for the family, and then each afternoon is to be given to a workshop on the following phases, family-centered worship service, the rural families' worship, family recreation, and a summarizing workshop on the pastoral counseling course.

This seems like an excellent procedure and we call it to the attention of those who have responsibility for summer short courses.

Book Reviews

The Church in Our Town. By ROCKWELL C. SMITH. Abington-Cokesbury. 1945. $1.50.

Dr. Smith in this short comprehensive volume has written a much needed book dealing with the practical aspects of rural and small town sociology as viewed from the standpoint of the rural church. Here in a few short chapters is a course in rural orientation. It is written for churchmen, "written for the men who are concerned that the little church shall express in its life the will of God".

The first twelve chapters describe and evaluate the various influences and organizations that commonly are present in the average rural community. Here rural society is described as it is expressed in family, neighborhood and community patterns. There is a good chapter (III) on how a rural church can define the boundaries of its responsibility, and how to study and evaluate population data that can be brought to light through surveys. Chapters four to twelve are about land, farm and labor organizations, local trade and its influence, rural schools, and various other educational and welfare agencies such as the Agricultural Extension Service and County Health Units. Chapters twelve to fifteen deal with the problem of how to effectively relate the work of the church to these other agencies and forces that influence community life.

Fundamentally, this is a book about community redemption through the rural church. While the author writes from a sound sociological point of view, this is more than a prosaic treatise on rural sociology. One might say that the last three chapters could easily constitute a hand-book on rural social action. One does not need to agree with every opinion or value judgment of the author to appreciate that he has in this book rendered a rich service in helping to formulate an effective and practical social strategy for rural church leaders to follow.

—Ray F. Magnuson

The Methodist Book of Worship

• One of the most significant volumes on worship is *The Book of Worship for Church and Home* which has just been issued by the Methodist Church. It is the most ambitious undertaking of its kind which any denomination has attempted, and provides over 500 pages of worship material. Not only is there a long list of orders of worship appropriate to almost all public occasions; but there are in addition one hundred pages of aids to personal and family devotions, including a schedule of daily readings and prayers for a month. This volume should be an excellent guide and a vital stimulus to worship in the whole round of life. It is a book which will have wide circulation both within and without Methodism.

It is available from the Methodist Publishing House, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N. Y., at 75c a copy.

Hymns of Fellowship

• The Commission on Worship of the Federal Council of Churches has recently published a hymn book entitled *Hymns of Fellowship.* This is a volume of 175 hymns and forty pages of worship material prepared originally for use in religious services in institutions. It is a book, however, which will be useful to many other groups which desire a moderate sized hymn book. Single copies may be obtained for $1.00 postpaid and quantity orders are 70c each plus transportation. Further information may be obtained from the Commission on Worship, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Roe McDanolds Has a Farm

• A bulletin by this title, published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C., tells an interesting story of how Roe McDanolds, a New Hampshire farmer, increased his milk production and consistently decreased the amount of grain he fed his cows. It is a story illustrative of well-planned and efficiently managed dairy farming. Copies can be secured from the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Race Relations

• A bulletin entitled, *A Monthly Summary of Events and Trends in Race Relations,* is published by the Social Science Institute of Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee. If churches are desirous of precise information on what is happening in this field, they should have a copy of this bulletin. It has a comprehensive coverage of the national and a rather adequate coverage of the international situations.

God's Handwriting

HE writes in characters too grand
For our short sight to understand:
We catch but broken strokes
and try
To fathom all the mystery
Of withered hopes, of death,
of life,
The endless war, the useless strife,
But there, with larger, clearer
sight
We shall see this—HIS Way was
right.

Contributors

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Change of Address

• Experience indicates that many subscribers are failing to notify us about changes of address. If you are changing your address, please notify us promptly. A postcard will do.

Contributions Wanted

• Every reader is a potential contributor of material for this paper.

We need three types of material:

(1) Articles of about 900 words (to fill a page), descriptive of a local program.

(2) Short items; news, plans, publications available.

(3) Illustrations; glossy photos, line drawings, cuts of rural scenes.

Circulars Available

• Quantities of circulars describing TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH are available without charge to any reader.